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Sen. Hardiman disappointed in decision that keeps gay-marriage amendment off Nov. 2 ballot

LANSING – Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, expressed disappointment today that the Board of State Canvassers prevented a November vote on the definition of marriage. Earlier this week, the board deadlocked 2-2 over whether to certify a constitutional amendment on the Nov. 2 ballot that would define marriage as being between one man and one woman.

“I think it is inappropriate for the Board of State Canvassers to make political judgments about the merits of ballot proposals,” Hardiman said. “Clearly, two board members wanted to prevent a vote on this issue simply because they disagree with the proposal.”

The Board of State Canvassers normally decides whether enough valid signatures have been gathered. About 318,000 valid signatures are necessary to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot and amendment supporters collected more than 460,000. More than 11,500 people in Hardiman’s 29th Senate District alone signed the petition.

“Our state constitution empowers citizens to circulate petitions on important policy questions and to vote on those questions,” Hardiman said. “It is troubling that two board members are trying to block that process when it seems certain there are more than enough valid signatures.

“The right to petition is too important to fall victim to political tricks or maneuvers. I call on the governor to reconsider her comments in support of this stunt. The hundreds of thousands of citizens who signed and circulated the petitions deserve better.”

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